
Title: Preface

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# Preface

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In the context of emerging diseases, parasite zoonoses figure prominently, undoubtedly because of the shifting interactions between humans and other animals. Climate change, migration, globalisation, environmental degradation and deforestation, urbanisation and encroachment into wildlife habitats are just some of the factors influencing the changes we are seeing and underline the need for this Special Issue. Hence the need to re-examine the global burden of parasitic zoonoses and highlight any changes in the trends that are influencing the epidemiology of these diseases (Torgerson and Macpherson). For example, changing eating habits, globalisation of the food trade and changes in food production systems, are some of the major trends influencing the recent emergence or re-emergence of many foodborne parasitic diseases (Broglia and Kapel). Our relationship with companion animals presents ongoing issues with respect to public health, especially with increasing interaction between domestic animals and wildlife, and even though effective control options are available for well known parasites of pets such as *Toxocara* (Deplazes and colleagues). The burden of zoonotic enteric protozoan infections is greatest in people in developing regions, particularly children, yet the impact of chronic infections, polyparasitism and the frequency of zoonotic and foodborne transmission have been neglected and represent challenges for the future (Thompson and Smith). Although common, parasite zoonoses in the SE Asian region have also been neglected in the past and it is important to understand the influence of environmental, socio-cultural and livestock production changes (Conlan and colleagues). Northern regions also demand more attention in the context of parasite zoonoses and indigenous peoples where there is a growing awareness of the role of dogs and wildlife in transmission, especially since such regions are likely to be impacted by the effects of climate change (Jenkins and colleagues). Indeed, the influence of climatic changes on the distribution of vector-borne parasite zoonoses is a growing area of concern, particularly with increasing urbanisation, migration, deforestation and global economic challenges (Colwell and colleagues). The role of wildlife in the transmission of parasite zoonoses is discussed in a number of the papers in this Special Issue, but perhaps it is recent research on *Toxoplasma* in wildlife that has had the biggest impact on our understanding of the population genetics, phylogeny, transmission and ecology of any of the parasites that are featured here (Wendte and colleagues).